



REPUBLIKA HRVATSKA
MINISTARSTVO POLJOPRIVREDE I ŠUMARSTVA
Veterinary Administration

10000 Zagreb, Ul. grada Vukovara 78, P.P. 1034
Telefon: 61 06 111, Telefax: 61 09 200

Class: 322-01701/01/460
File No.: 525-06-01-02/NG/
Zagreb, June 1, 2001

USDA/FSIS
Washington DC 20250
14th & Independence Avenue, SW
To: Sally Stratmoen, Acting Director
International Policy Staff

Re: Reply by the competent authority of the Republic of Croatia to the Draft Report of the USDA/FSIS inspection team on the findings on the spot during the inspection carried out from 4th-12th December 2000 in the Republic of Croatia

Dear Sirs,

By this letter we would like to acknowledge the receipt of the Draft Report (23rd April 2001) on the findings of the veterinary inspection carried out in the Republic of Croatia in the period from 4th to 12th December 2000 and to give our reply observing the set period of time.

We have pleasure to submit our action plan the implementation of which followed immediately after the completion of inspection by the USDA/FSIS inspection team in the republic of Croatia and recommendations provided during the telephone conference by your authorities, in order to enable us to remove deficiencies mentioned in the Report.

At the same time, we confirm the receipt of the 1999 Report and would like to thank you very much for all the instructions given to us as well as for an open professional cooperation extended by your competent authorities.

Sincerely yours,

Assistant to the Minister- Director



Encl.: Reply to the Draft Report 2000

- C.C.: 1. USDA/FSIS/TSC, Suite 300, Landmark Center,
1299 Farnam Street, Omaha, NE 68102
2. American Embassy, Office of Agricultural Affairs,
Boltzmanngasse 16, A-1091 Vienna, Austria
Agricultural Counselor, Mr. Robert. H. Curtis
3. Embassy of the USA, Zagreb, Andrije Hebranga 2
Economic Officer, U.S. Embassy – Jill Byrnes
4. Archives - here

Reply to the Draft Final Report on the inspection team's findings during the inspection carried out in the Republic of Croatia in the period from 4th to 12th December 2000

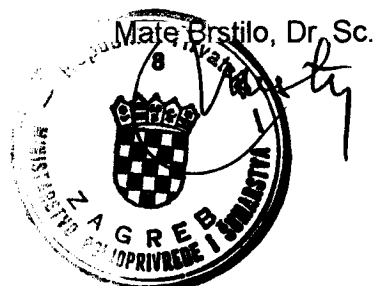
This competent authority provided a verbal information about the measures taken during the telephone conference with USDA/FSIS held on 8th and 12th March 2001, as well as by way of written documents sent till 10th March 2001 concerning the steps taken in order to remove deficiencies.

By this reply to the received Report we would like to inform you about the plan of action and measures taken for rectifying of deficiencies mentioned in inspection team's Report following the routine inspection and during the official verification of the equivalency of the Croatian meat inspection system, carried out in December 2000.

Reply by the central competent authority of the Republic of Croatia to the Draft Final:

- as from 1st March 2001 control has been introduced in the export establishments on the pigs and cattle slaughter lines in order to prevent faecal contamination by application of SPC;
- in the export establishments written procedures have been introduced recording the handling of meat and carcasses dropped on the floor;
- in the export establishments, as from 9th February 2001, pre-shipment control has been introduced, which is recorded and verified by the competent responsible person and veterinary inspector on the form prescribed for that purpose;
- the establishments are carrying out regular reassessment of their HACCP Plans once a year (for the previous year at the beginning of the current year);
- the risk of *Listeria monocytogenes* presence in "ready to eat" products has also been reassessed in the establishments;
- in February 2001, veterinary inspectors from the export establishments were included in the training at College Station/USA/Texas;
- in one of the establishments (No. 10) control has been continued over the identification of species (kind of meat) in the national laboratory of the Croatian Veterinary Institute in Zagreb (evident from the findings in the 1999 Report) and in the other establishment (No. 139) the implementation of control has started in February 2001, until the final decision by your competent authorities about our request for exemption from the species identification. (In this connection please find enclosed a copy of the USDA competent body's letter and the request for exemption by the competent authorities of the Republic of Croatia, dated 14th February 2000);
- technical deficiencies in one of the establishments (No. 139) at the platforms in contact with carcasses in the pigs and cattle slaughterhouse, were successfully removed prior to 2nd January 2000;
- the HACCP Plan on the pork and beef boning line in one of the export establishments (No. 139) has been implemented as from 2nd February 2001.
- in one of the establishments (No. 10) the blue/green ink, used for marking of hygienically safe bovine halves, was immediately (during the inspection itself) put out of use.

Assistant to the Minister- Director



Encloser: Request for exemption-doc.



Embassy of the United States of America

REPUBLIKA HRVATSKA
525 — MINISTARSTVO POLJOPRIVREDE I
ŠUMARSTVA

Priloga: / 1 -02- 2000	
322-01/00-01/001	
Uredbeni broj	Pril. Vrij.

Office of Agricultural Affairs
American Embassy
Boltzmanngasse 16
A-1091 Wien

January 25, 2000

Dr. Mate Brstilo
Director of Veterinary Directorate
Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry
A. Vukovar 78
41000 Zagreb
Croatia

Dear Dr. Brstilo:

We received from Mr. Mark Manis, Director, International Policy Division (IPD), Office of Policy, Program Development and Evaluation (OPPDE), USDA/FSIS a message concerning species verification testing of fresh and cooked meat. We are forwarding this message for your action.

Sincerely,

Allan P. Mustard
Agricultural Counselor

Enclosure



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Food Safety
and Inspection
Service

Washington, D.C.
20250

JAN 18 2000

Dr. Mate Brstilo, Director
Veterinary Administration
Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry
Utica grada Vukovra 78
10000 Zabreb, Croatia

Dear Dr. Brstilo:

All countries that are eligible to export meat or poultry to the United States must conduct species verification testing of fresh and cooked products intended for shipment to the U.S. market. The Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) initiated the requirement for species verification testing of fresh meat in 1981. Species verification testing for cooked meat products was required in 1988. The purpose of this letter is to clarify FSIS policy for exempting foreign countries from routine species verification testing.

In 1991, FSIS sent a cable to all eligible countries informing them that they could be exempted from routine species verification testing if they had satisfactory controls in place to assure that commingling of species did not occur. The conditions for exemption included all of the following:

1. Carcasses and products are transported between establishments in devices which are sealed with a tamper detectable inspection seal applied by the Inspection Service at the originating establishment and broken by the Inspection Service at the receiving establishment.
2. Brands and sealing devices used by the Inspection Service to identify and seal product are kept under Inspection Service control.
3. Establishments are under continuous Inspection Service supervision while operating. No operations may take place without Inspection Service supervision.
4. Only one species of livestock or meat is allowed in the slaughter or processing areas at one time.
5. Product must be exported to the United States in a cargo container sealed by the Inspection Service.

Please advise FSIS in writing within 30 days after the date this letter is delivered, whether your country is conducting routine species verification testing as required or if you wish to request an exemption from this testing. The conditions noted above must be met before an exemption will be granted.

Your response should be directed to:

Director, International Policy Division
Food Safety and Inspection Service, USDA
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Room 4434 South
Washington, DC 20250

If your country requests an exemption and if it is granted, FSIS will verify the exemption conditions outlined above during our next audit of your inspection system. For further information or questions, please contact Ms. Nancy Goodwin at (202) 720-6400; fax (202) 720-7990.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mark Manis". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Mark" and last name "Manis" clearly distinguishable.

Mark Manis, Director
International Policy Division
Office of Policy, Program Development
and Evaluation



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Veterinary Administration

10000 Zagreb, Ul. grada Vukovara 78, P.P. 1034
Telefon: 61 06 111, Telefaks: 61 09 200

Class: 322-01/00-01/101
File No.: 525-06-00-02/NG/
Zagreb, February 14, 2000.

Director, International Policy Division
FSIS/ USDA
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Room 4434 South
Washington, DC 20250

Subject: Request for an exemption from routine species verification testing of meat products -
exported from the Republic of Croatia to the USA market

Dear Dr.Manis,

The Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry of the Republic of Croatia - Veterinary Directorate has registered with central competent body -USDA/FSIS, two establishment for export to the USA market. These establishments have approved export numbers: No 10 and No 139. Both establishment comply with the conditions laid down by federal Meat Inspection Act and the conditions laid down in 327.2 (a).

By your letter of 25th January 2000 a possibility is provided for an exemption from routine species verification testing under the specified conditions. In this connection, we would like to inform you that the Republic of Croatia meets the required conditions and therefore would like to request exemption from this testing (Annex).

Under the cover of this letter please find the statement on the implementation of effective inspections and controls based on and organized in accordance with the Veterinary Law (Official Gazette No. 70/97), by which the commingling of raw materials-meats of various species is prevented.

Hoping that the respective exemption will be granted, we remain,

Sincerely yours,
Assistant to the Minister-Director
Mate Brstilo, Ph.D.



Encl.

Guaranties in respect of complying with the required conditions for an exemption from verification testing - tissue standardization.

ANNEX

Clarification on complying with the required conditions for exemption of the Republic of Croatia from tissue standardization for individual animal species, as follows:

1. Carcasses and products in the domestic traffic between the approved establishments, are transported by means of transportation which comply with the conditions laid down for transportation of such consignments, with the following verifications being carried out:

1.1. Veterinary-sanitary conditions and health status of the consignment;
Accuracy of the accompanying veterinary-sanitary documentation;
Compliance of the means of transportation with the required conditions;

1.2. In the approved establishments in the Republic of Croatia, loading, transshipment and unloading of consignments of meat and products of animal origin in domestic trading as well as in the trading over the state borders, is subject to obligatory veterinary-sanitary checks.

The obligatory veterinary-sanitary checks are carried out at the place of loading, transshipment and unloading of consignments and they include:

- checking of the accompanying documentation and the data in health certificate;
- identity verification for every consignment in order to establish whether the consignment comply with the data stated in the accompanying documentation;
- verification, the intention of which is to establish whether the stamps and official and health marks (identifying the establishment and the country of origin) are correctly applied to accompanying documents and a consignment (including respective veterinary certificate).

1.3. Consignments in the international trading are, along with satisfying the previously mentioned conditions, accompanied by the international certificate on animal health and sanitary safety of a consignment, which must be original, composed on the day of shipment, for one animal species and one kind of products, for one consignee, verified as prescribed and marked with a serial number.

1.4. Consignments exported from an approved establishment are sealed by an inspection seal, applied by veterinary inspection in the establishment, in order to avoid possible manipulations.

1.5. An authorised veterinarian keeps records of the performed veterinary-sanitary checks of consignment in domestic and international trading as well as of loading, transshipments, on the official forms HVI - I and HVI II.

2. Brands and sealing devices used by inspection service to identify product and seal a consignment are kept under the key in the official veterinary inspection premises in the establishment and they are responsibility of the inspection premises in the establishment and they are responsibility of the veterinary inspector in charge, who is known by his first and last name.

3. All export establishments in the Republic of Croatia are under continuous inspection service control and supervision (24 hours). In an establishment not a single operation in production may be carried out without veterinary inspection being present (Ante mortem insp., Post mortem insp., re-inspection of the meat, unloading, loading, ... etc.)

4. For slaughter and processing in export establishments there are separate lines for slaughter, cutting and processing for only one animal species.

5. When exported to USA, products are transported in a cargo container sealed by inspection service in an export establishment, bearing a seal with the approved establishment's number.

